

*Notes on a Visit to the Tribes inhabiting the Hills south of Síbságár,
Asám.—By S. E. PEAL, Esq.*

The various Hill tribes bordering on the valley of Asám, both on the north-east and south, present so many points of interest and seem to be so little known, that I take the opportunity of putting these few notes together of a short trip into the hills to the south of Síbságár district, Mauza' Oboe-púr, hoping they may be of some use or interest.

Our ignorance of these various tribes, their many languages, customs, and internal arrangements, seems to be only equalled by their complete ignorance of us, our power and resources. The principle of elanship is here 'carried to the extreme ; not only are there numerous well marked tribes inhabiting considerable traets, as the Bútias, the Abors, Singphús, Nágás, but these again are cut up into small, and usually isolated, communities, who, among the Nágás at least, are constantly at war with each other. Their isolation is often so complete, that their resources lie wholly within their limited area.

There seems good reason to suppose that the present state of things has existed for a considerable period. Not only are the languages spoken by contiguous tribes often mutually unintelligible, but the still better evidence of strongly marked physical variation holds good. And to these inferences of a long period must be added the tangible fact, that at their villages, or 'chang', and not elsewhere in the hills, there are numerous Jack trees, many of them very large, and not less than 400 years old, I should say, as the Jack is a slow growing wood.

I had often wished to visit some of these 'chang', but had not the opportunity till this occasion ; and though the season was rather advanced, I determined to go, as the Rájah of the Banparas had invited me for the third or fourth time. My nearest neighbour consented to accompany me, and arrangements were made to start on the 30th May, at day-break.

Before daylight our people were astir, caught the elephants, and tied our baggage. At 6 a. m., we started. Our party consisted of two native muharris, a barqandáz, and six Leklas, an interpreter, or Sokeal, joining us afterwards.

It was a beautiful morning, a fresh breeze blowing across Bhagmorial Potar as we passed through it, though we lost it on entering the jungle at foot of the hills beyond. The path, so-called, we found clearer than was to be expected ; fallen trees and such like obstructions were singularly few. Game was looked for in vain, although it was evidently a good shooting ground ; and tracks of buffaloe, pig, and deer, were plentiful. This luck indeed pursued us the whole way, though it must have been exceptional. We soon reached the Ladia Ghur, an old road, leading from Kukila Mukh

viá Nazíra to Jaipúr, and here so covered by jungle and bamboo as to be wholly impassable. It is usually considered the boundary line between us and the so-called Nágá territory.

The land then descends a few feet, and the river Tíok was seen ahead at a very picturesque little bend, making a capital foreground, as it splashed over the boulders and ran among the snags, the hills behind rising clear and blue. The swash of the water was quite a pleasant sound to us, so long accustomed to these muddy streams. After crossing it, the road lay through a fine piece of high land, and soon after entered and went along the bed of a small stream. We here dismounted; for the bed of the stream afforded a good path, as there was but little water, and consisted of sand and pebbles. Blocks of petrified wood lay about in profusion, and so good that the first piece I took up, I had mistaken for real wood. Quartz pebbles were plentiful, but the rock on all sides was sandstone. In some places the traffic had worn down the rock into a narrow passage, where only one at a time could pass, and also into holes and steps, very well for Nágás to grip with their bare feet, but slippery and unaccommodating to thick-soled boots. To this narrow gorge succeeded an open tract close to the foot of the first hill, part of which had been cultivated by Nágás a few years ago, and had now relapsed into rank grass, as Ulkí, Borata and Hamorú, with a few trees here and there, and would in another few years be forest again. We halted here to let the elephants come up: the path in several places, having been obstructed by bamboo, had to be cleared a little for them. After another steep ascent, we reached the head of the pass, or lowest point in this first range, which here runs parallel with the valley.

The range of view extended from Jaipúr in the east round by the hills on the 'North bank,' (or continuation of the Himálayas) which were beautifully distinct, and then as far west as Cherydo and Nazíra. Both the hills we were on, and those bounding the north, presented a strong contrast to the plain we had just left. The latter seemed as flat as it was possible to be, literally a sea of jungle forest, an enormous dead level. The smallness of the area under cultivation surprised us more than any thing: it did not look one per cent. The Potars I could easily recognize, Búrasálí, Nágáhát, Bhagmorial, Borhoh, Tyrai, Tinikuria, Rohona Potar, none were missed; yet they were but little green streaks, hardly noticed in the general view. With binoculars I could make them all out, even my bungalow houses. The amount of waste land is enormous. The Brahmá-putra was not visible, though to be seen at times they say; we searched also in vain for Síbságá; the distance perhaps was too great, though it must have been within our horizon line.

While we were enjoying the prospect, the chief brother of the Rájah made his appearance with some of his people, and seemed quite delighted,

talking away as if we understood every word of his Nágá, and rattling his beads and bits of metal as he walked about. We soon afterwards proceeded over some undulating ground, and then took to the bed of another stream, also rocky, narrow, dark, and slippery ; the rocks still being sand-stone, with a dip to the south of 70° to 80° , in fact almost vertical, the strike running nearly east and west like the range itself. At a more open part of the road, we came to a large pit, about $12' \times 8' \times 12'$ deep, right in the path, and made to catch wild elephants. The bottom literally bristled with large bamboo spears, 5 or 6 feet long, firmly fixed in the earth, and carefully sharpened—certain death to any elephant falling in. The pit was nearly hidden by overhanging grass and creepers and was dug at a spot where the path on either side was difficult, and the edges were undermined. After seeing our elephants pass this safely, we went on the road now descending, and still over rock, usually very slippery, and winding about abruptly, when after a second steep descent, we heard the rush of water below and caught glimpses of the hills beyond. The stream was soon reached. It is a tributary of the Tiok, called the Sissa, running here to the east. It was now a small stream, but the rounded boulders on the flanks bore witness to its being at times a formidable obstacle. Having our doubts about the elephants being able to reach this point, we sat down at a little 'Dhubi', or water hole, under the shade of a Bor tree. The pool turned out to be full of fish, so plentiful in fact that on throwing in a small bit of gravel the whole bottom seemed to rise from all sides. Most of them were small ; there were however a few large ones near the bottom.

The only way the Nágás take them is by hand or poison ; but we saw a lot of Nágánis carefully turning the stones over, and occasionally catching a little one.

A Sowdong and a Hundekai both of whom I knew well, were here waiting for our arrival. A 'Sowdong' is a sort of travelling deputy to the Rájah ; and a 'Hundekai' is a resident deputy, and is of a higher grade. The highest next to the Rájah and his family is a 'Khúnsai,' and there is one to each village. We consulted them as to the best route, and they at first advised us to go along the bed of the stream ; but as it was so full of huge rocks and holes, that no elephant could pass, we had to decide on the ordinary mountain path via Longhong, the shortest way, but by far the steepest. The elephants at last made their appearance ; how they managed to get down places, where we had to scramble on all fours was a mystery to us—at times they seemed immediately over us.

We crossed some deep crevices over which there were rude bridges. The steepness of the ascent, especially under the hot sun, soon began to tell on us, and the elephants seemed so distressed, though we were not half way up, that we called a halt, and held a council, the first result being to unload the ele-

phants and send them back to the Sissa, as we saw that we could not rely on Nágá estimates of distance or difficulty.

The Rájah's brother and the Hundekai of Longhong now had a long and noisy palaver, as to who should, would, or could, furnish the men to carry the few things left by the elephants. Their real power over internal affairs seems small: the men of Longhong treated the Royal brother as little better than their equal, and almost came to a row. Row enough there always is when they argue any matter however small; it seems their custom to speak loud and look excited over nothing. The Longhong Hundekai at last agreed to get the three or four men required, as his 'chang' was near, and we hastened their discussion by saying that if men did not soon come, we should follow our elephants.

The Rájah's brother now started off for Banpara to report that we would not reach it that night, and get some huts built half way between Longhong and Banpara where we could sleep.

This second hill is also of sandstone, running into a finer kind, and then into a laminated clay, with a dip to the south of about 70° or 80°, and often vertical and several times inverted. At the surface it seemed to form a rich loam, and almost the whole hill was under rice, though seemingly a bad crop.

The road still followed the crest of the ridge, as is usual, and we soon came to the region of bamboo, which is found close to the changes; and where it branched off leading to Banpara, we found the Longhong Khúnsai seated in state on some leaves, his spear stuck in the ground beside him. At some 20 feet on each side were other officials, also in state on leaves and with their spears. The Khúnsai I knew well, and had a talk with him. I found, he had a bad foot, tied up in very dirty linen, and told him to wash both and keep a water-poultice on. The only extra-decoration they indulged in was a topí with a long feather in the crown. We were passing on to see Longhong, when the old fellow hailed us, and gave us his formal permission to proceed. This we had omitted to wait for, but it seems to be considered by them necessary.

A Longhong went with us, while the rest awaited our return to this point. We now saw for the first time how they weed the 'dhán,' commencing at the bottom of the slopes and working upwards, in parties of ten to twenty. The dhán stalks seem far apart, and they use a bamboo loop to serape up the earth, removing the weeds with the left hand and throwing them in little heaps. Each house or family seems to have its dhán marked out by sticks, stones, or weed heaps, and neighbours combine to work in batches. The rate at which they get over the ground was astonishing, the work being well done. The dhán was not in ear, and this was their second weeding. I was told, it was enough for this year.

The land had last year, I believe, been redeemed from young forest and

was almost destitute of trees and stumps. The labour they are put to for a scanty crop is almost incredible. They seldom cultivate the same piece of land for more than two years in succession, as grass comes up rapidly the second year, and they have no way of eradicating it, the only implement used in cultivation being the *dháo*. After the second year, they let the land go into jungle and make fresh clearances for their dhán. The hills are thus in all stages of jungle and forest, now all grass, as Borata, Ulu, and Hamorú; or ground deserted for three years, all in small tree jungle (for the trees kill the grass in that time); on other patches again larger trees may be seen, five and six years old, or eight and ten, and no grass at all. In about ten years all the available rice-growing land has had a turn, and they can clear the young forest again. They thus require far more land than the ryots in the plains, especially if the smallness of the crop yielded is taken into account.

We soon reached Longhong passing through fine groves of Lottu and Wattu bamboo, and came upon the fortifications of which I had heard so often. The first attempt almost made us laugh. There were a few sticks of ekra and bamboo stuck in like a common fence, on the off-side of a ditch about 6 feet wide by 6 feet deep, over which there was a small bridge.

A little further on we passed some small raised changs, on which we saw bodies tied up in Tocoopalm leaves, and roofed in. We heard it was the way in which they disposed of their dead. All customs relating to this subject are worth noting, so we examined them with some interest.

We next came to a kind of palisade, with a long narrow passage between bamboo walls, three feet apart, not very strong, but enough to check a rush. It was the most formidable point of defence, as it was commanded by a large rock in front, on which a house had been built to give extra cover, and had a precipice on the left, the right also being steep. There seemed to be no one on duty, which was contrary to what I had heard and expected. On entering the chang, we could see very few houses at a time, the ground being very uneven, and the paths steep and tortuous, eminently calculated for defence, and such as give the spear its fullest advantage, when opposed to firearms.

The houses were all thatched with Tocoopalm leaves and not grass, as in the plains, the centre posts also all projected through the roof line for some 5 or 6 feet, and were bound with leaves, presenting a very singular appearance. They were built without any arrangement, no doubt many times over on the same sites, the level being eked out by a platform raised on posts, which people use to sit on, or dance, or hold open air meetings.

But by far the most striking feature was the number and size of the Jack trees, many of them evidently very old. We were told that the fruit, of which there seemed a large crop, was religiously respected. Each house has certain trees. The timber used in building was also usually Jack, and as

it is one of the most durable timbers, the Jack trees serve two purposes. The hill summits around are destitute of them, unless where there is a village. There seem in fact no villages without Jacks and no Jacks without a village. We have therefore here a valuable means of reviewing their past history to some extent, as Jack, *Artocarpus integrifolius*, is a slow-growing wood, closely allied to the Sam, Chama, or *Artocarpus chaplaska* Roxb., so celebrated for building and other purposes, and which I suspect is the 'Satin-wood' of our English timber-dealers.

Water supply seemed a great difficulty. We often saw little troughs placed to catch drippings from the rock, but containing little else than mud. There are no tanks, I hear, and as most of the 'chang' are built on the hill tops, where springs are not likely to be numerous, it seems a serious difficulty, enhanced too by the strata being all on-edge and sandstone. At this village, the water is obtained in a deep cleft facing the north and some 300 yards down; but even this occasionally fails.

We were taken to the highest point in the village from whence we had a fine view of the surrounding changs. To the east, nearest to Longhong and the plains, lay the Húrú Mútons' chang on its peak, which is wooded to the top. With the binoculars the houses could be clearly seen in detail, they seemed the same as in Longhong. The Húrú Mútons are the deadly enemies of the Banpara tribe, though so close. Next to the south lie the Kúlún Mútons, also on a hill, and next to them again the Bor Mútons, on a conical hill with the village on the apex. More to the south and in the extreme distance was the chang of the Neyowlung Nágás, or, as they are called, Abors; and due south was U'núgáon, one of the four Banpara villages. Several small ranges ran behind these, all inhabited by Abors, up to the foot of the Deoparbat due east. This mountain is uninhabited, and called 'Deoparbat' from an idea that it is haunted by a Deo, or devil. Hollow noises are said to be heard on the summit, where a lake is believed to exist. It is wooded to the top, and the western face is rather precipitous; here and there large masses of rock stand out clear of the forest and so light as to look like quartz. From behind U'núgáon a large hill rises, shutting in the view; on it are the so-called Abors, who can never get into the plains, though in sight, as the border tribes would "eat" them, as it is called. In the foreground of this hill lay a series of small hills, all Banpara territory, and on one of them we were shewn the village of that name where the Rájah resides. Nearly due south-west, Joboka rises, and is as conspicuous here as from the plains, having a gradual slope on its southern face, and a very steep one to the north. It is the hill of the Joboka tribe, with whom the Banparas are constantly at war, with varying success. As we were viewing the changs around, a good many women, boys, and girls came to stare at us, a compliment we often involuntarily returned.

The sun was now getting low, and we returned to the place where we had left the Khúnsai seated in state. He called several of the groups of weeder up to see us. They at first seemed afraid to come, most of them being women and girls, a few stunted and old, and some strapping wenches, who could do more climbing in a day than I in a week. We then took the path down the hill and among the dhán, that led to Banpara, many weeding parties on the road stopping to stare and jabber at us. They certainly seemed to work hard, though it was nearly dark, and long past the time to leave off work in the plains.

We now reached the point where the huts had been built on the Sissa River, and just as it got dark, our men with the loads came in at the same time.

The temporary huts were rude in the extreme, consisting only of a few sticks stuck in the ground and others laid across. Some wild plantain leaves formed our so-called roof. The stream rushing among the stones gave us a pleasant reminiscence of home, and soon sent us to sleep.

About an hour after, we were all roused up by a loud thunder-clap, and found by the incessant lightning that a storm was coming up. We therefore hastily rigged walls to the chang we slept on, a waterproof sheet making a good roof; our guns were stowed under our heads and our sundries under the chang. The rain came down in torrents, but we were so tired that we fell asleep, and did not find till morning that we had been saturated. Some Nágás came during the storm down from Banpara, bound for Longhong; how they managed to find their way in the dark puzzled us. We also heard bears not far off.

On the 31st we were up early, and had our breakfast. The royal brother now made his appearance, several Khúnsais and Hundekais came too, to escort us, and all who could muster up the remains of a coat, wore the same in our honour. On starting, we adopted the Nágá custom of using a staff, as they do their 'jatties', or spears, to assist us in getting over the rough ground, and found we got on far easier by its help.

The path, at first very steep and up a ferny cleft, soon became more level, and passed round the shoulders and along the ridges of a series of small hills, tolerably level in the main, and at a sufficient height to give us a good view of our surroundings. A part of the road had just been cleared for us, or the jungle and grass had been thrown aside, for which we were much obliged to them as the grass was literally dripping with dew. As in Asám, the morning dew here is like a shower, and on pausing for a moment, it sounded quite loud falling from the trees and jungle.

At about half way to Banpara, we came to a kind of abbatis, at a point that could be easily defended, *i. e.*, a narrow ridge with a precipice on each

side, and not more than four or five yards across. The obstruction was commanded by a rise in the ground beyond, on which there was good cover, while there was none on the near side. The fortification could not be seen, even from a distance, and was no doubt the best point of defence on the route. There was, however, another point further on where the road for a short distance was cut on the face of a precipice, and only a few inches wide. Here a few determined men could hold any number in check for some time, the precipice being so steep, that I plucked a leaf off a tree top that was fully eighty feet high. We soon after came to the region of Dollu and Wattu bamboos, of which there were immense numbers, and here saw cattle tracks, both cows and buffaloes, and were told they came by the same route as we did, which we could hardly credit.

They here asked our permission to fire a salute, no doubt to warn the Rájah's people of our proximity. We soon after reached the first point in the village finding it a counterpart of Longhong, extremely irregular and broken up, the houses all thatched with Tocoo leaves, and the centre posts projecting. The Jack trees were both large and numerous; we also saw a Nágá 'bik', or poison, tree, the leaves of which are used to intoxicate fish, an endogen and not unlike an aloe on a long stem. They at once conducted us to the Rájah's house, the largest by far in the chang, and also the highest. It was a repetition of all the other houses. We had to climb up a notched tree stem to reach the bamboo chang floor, and found ourselves at once in the Royal presence.

The Rájah seemed a shrewd man, about 40 to 45 years old, tall and of course tattooed. He was seated on a sort of huge stool about 8 feet by 4 or 5, over which there was a coloured rug of either Indian or English manufacture, certainly not Nágá. We were pointed out to a similar sort of bench opposite, at about 8 or 10 feet distance, where we sat down, glad to get a rest after our toil, and to look around us a little. The heir-apparent sat on a smaller throne, to the Rájah's right and at some 15 or 20 feet, a strapping fine young fellow. He had an heir-apparent-manner about him which was to some extent very telling, and was decorated *à la Naga*; for with exception of a black cloth flung round him while he sat, he had but a bead and cowrie costume, and was tattooed also of course. The Royal brothers of the Rájah were all en suite, and sat about Royalty on little three-legged stools, the whole of them with faces of such intense gravity shaded off by a futile attempt at indifference, that they looked supremely ludicrous. Of the brothers we found there were six; we had only heard of two. On the outskirts of this upper ten, sat and stood the sons and nephews, &c., some of them very smart young fellows, and decorated in the most fantastic style, and very few tattooed. In the distance sat the outsiders, and not a few. Most of the Khúnsais, Hundekais, and Sowdongs, who could do so, came to see us.

We were now treated to unlimited discourse, several speaking at once, sometimes in Asamese which we could understand, and often in Nágá which we could not—chiefly as to how the Rájah had heard of us, and wished to look on us as “brothers”, that I had been some three or four years so near and had never visited him before. The Rájah spoke of the difficulty which his people often had in getting grain, and that they then relied to a great extent on several villages in the plains. We in fact heard that in the Rájah’s house alone was there any considerable quantity of grain from last year’s crop. Some little stress was laid on our passing “their Duárs,” and we could plainly see that they had but vague ideas regarding their position. We were invited to behold the power and grandeur of the Rájah of Banpara, whose sway extended over several mountains and four villages, *i. e.*, Banpara, Longhong, Uñú, and Nokrong, while neighbouring Royalty often was confined to one, and whose warriors were literally countless, at least by Nágá numerals.

We were then asked to perform a few miracles, in a general way, with which we immediately complied, firing our revolvers into a large tree stem close by. My friend led off steadily, and when I began he reloaded and kept it up and put five more from my revolving carbine. This was a good beginning, and there was a great deal of wind expended over it in ‘wah-wahing’; it was considered awful. He then drew fire from heaven, or rather the sun, through a lens of the binooculars. And no amount of persuasion would induce a Nágá to hold his hand under the focus. Matches were enquired after, and seemed to yield endless jabbering, when struck. I happened to strike one on my waistbelt having nothing hard enough near, and I afterwards heard that they thought I lit it by simply touching my skin, and that my deotá must be a “knowing devil.” A magnet attracting or repelling a needle, even from underneath the paper it lay on, was ‘dawái,’ medicine, and seemed to astonish less than I had expected.

An inspection of the house was then suggested, and it seems the correct thing to sit in audience for a time at one end and then walk through to the other, letting off a few polite ejaculations *en route*.

The house must have been 200 feet by 50 at least, though perhaps in the centre not over 30 feet high, from the floor. Like most of them, it was built two-thirds on the rock, and one-third continued out level by a chang, where the ground fell considerably, and supported on posts. This last is the audience end, and had in this case no gable wall, the roofing being semi-circular, so as to keep out wet. For the first 50 or 60 feet where the floor rested on posts, it was like a huge barn inside, and had no partitions, the large Jack posts shewing well in three rows, one down the centre, and one each side at about 15 feet. Some of the Marolis, or horizontal beams, (*wall plates* of the builder) were enormous, fully a foot or a foot and a half thick at the but end,

and some 50 to 60 feet long. How they were ever raised to their places, let alone up such a hill, was a mystery to us, though we were told that men lifted them on their shoulders. On the right hand wall were hung bones and skulls of pig, deer, mitton, buffalo, &c. About 50 or 60 lower jaws of the boar, made a fine display, all hung in a row, some huge tusks among them—evidently all hung as trophies of “feasting.”

The central portion of the house through which we next passed, appeared to have a series of cattle pens on each side of a central passage, the floor being rock, it was dark as pitch, and by no means fresh. From the tittering and whispering we heard as we passed or stumbled through, we concluded it was the realms of bliss, and after a hundred feet of it, we came out into another large room or hall, dedicated to dhán husking and pounding, the huge úral, cut out of a solid tree, being placed lengthwise and having places for about forty people to pound at once; the floor was also covered with husks. Here also we saw a small bamboo quad, for refractory youths.

On returning to the audience end, we were told that the Rájah was ready to receive his presents, “as most of the Khúnsais and Hundekais had gone.” So we made our men produce what we had brought, having been previously told by our own people, that we must expect them to be dissatisfied, but not to mind it. We had a large purple cloth with broad silver lace for the Rájah, a scarlet shirt, clasp knives, a red blanket, and Rs. 20 in cash. The others came in for similar things of less value, but which were reduced by their being six brothers instead of two as we had expected.

No end of palaver followed, and as we had been warned, they wanted more. The Rájah, it seems, had set his heart on a gun. This we assured him was very strictly prohibited, and that we of course dare not give one, and this I had often told them, but no attention was paid to our remark, the way they urged it shewed how little they understand us. One of the oldest Sowdongs who has seen three Rájahs, a man I knew well and who understands me better than most Nágás do, got up and made a long speech in Asamese, reiterating all the arguments, and eventually proposing seriously, that I should write direct to the ‘Maháráni’, and explain clearly, that it was for the Rájah of Banpara, and she would at once agree to the proposition. This was hailed by all as a coup de grace for us, and the general buzz as he sat down clearly proved he had brought down the House. To this we had to answer, that if guns were granted to one Rájah, all would claim them, and some were, as he knew, very insignificant, so that we knew no exception would be allowed. A revolver was next tried for, but we said that they were very complicated, often going off when least expected, and killing those dearest, as well as nearest. I was then offered a slave, if I would yield the gun question, and I understood, a slave for life; but this we had to shake our heads over, and look serious.

The palaver continuing we retired to where a part of the hall had been partitioned off for us by mat walls, under cover of a remark we heard that if there was much talk, a Sáhib's head ached. We now enjoyed a little peace, a bisuit, and a cigar, in more privaey. A deputation soon after came in to urge the gun case, but we ordered them out, in a mixed dialeet, saying that Sáhibs were not in the habit of paying taxes this way, and if they only wanted our presents, we should return at once. This had the desired effect. A procession now came up the house, headed by a Khúnsai and the Rájah's brother, the former beating a little gong, which was laid before us as the present from his Royal Highness, together with a couple of young goats; but we had been so worried, that we told our people privately, if possible, to forget them when coming away.

A visit to the houses of the chief brothers was next suggested, and we started off on a tour. They were all much alike, though smaller than the first: an audience end, open and with trophies of the chase and poison, then a series of the cattle pens as before mentioned, on each side of a dark passage, and a room at the other end for dhán-husking with its úral. The floor in all rose as we went on, the first portion being a chang raised on posts, and matted. We saw here some Abor women or girls, wives of the owners, one of whom, we were told, had cost five buffaloes, and was the daughter of an Abor Rájah. They seemed far more sprightly and intelligent and good looking than Nágánis, and could, we thought, understand us far better too; whether they were exceptional cases, I cannot say. They wore the hair in a long queue, tied up with beads and wire, and in many cases it was long, not cropped at all, as is common among Nágánis. Costume as usual was at a discount, and as is often said "a pocket handkerchief would make four suits;" yet with all this, I doubt if we could beat them in either real modesty or morals, and this applies to Nágánis too.

The Morrang (dead house), or place where the skulls taken in their wars are put, was next visited. It also contained the great drum cut out of a tree stem and hollowed like a boat. I had reason to think that they might have scruples to take us in, and as I had often tried to get a skull, I did not shew my interest in it outwardly. Roughly estimated, there were about 350 skulls. About half of them hung up by a string through a hole in the crown and in the open gable end, the other half lying in a heap on the ground. No lower jaws to be seen, nor hands and feet, as I had expected. The latter are always cut off with the bread when a man is killed, and confer another kind of 'ák' or decoration. None seemed fractured by a dháo, and a large number were of young people, or children, being small and smooth.

We were conscious of being face to face with the great cause of this tribal isolation, constant warfare, evidently a eustom of great antiquity.

As long as social position depends on tattooing as here, and can only be got by bringing in the head of an enemy, so long shall we have these wars and consequent isolation of clans. The man who brings in a head is no longer called a boy or woman, and can assist in councils of state, so called. And he seldom goes out on a raid again, I hear. The head he brings, is handed to the Rájah, who confers the 'ák,' or right of decoration by tattoo, at which there is great feasting, and pigs, cows, or even buffaloes are killed, and no end of 'moád,' or fermented rice water, is drunk. Those who are not tattooed, when old enough, make a party and lie in wait for stragglers, men, women, or children, anybody in fact with a head on him; and as cover is plentiful, they can get on the enemy's land and lie in ambush along side his paths; never breaking cover unless certain of success and getting clear off. All those who get heads, get the ák on the face; those who get hands and feet, get marks accordingly; for the former on the arms, for the latter on the legs. No two tribes, however, have the marks alike, and some even do not tattoo the face.

The worst of this kind of warfare is that women and children are as often killed as men, and without any compunction. I had a smart little fellow here at work for a long time, named 'Allec,' (four) and once asked him how he got his ák. He said he went out and lay in wait a long time near a spring, and at last a woman came for water, and he crept up behind her, and chopped her on the head, and then cut it off, and got off himself as quickly and quietly as he could. It was utterly incomprehensible to him how such a thing could be unmanly, I found it waste of time and breath trying to convince him.

Besides the skulls, the Morrang also contains the big drum which is nothing more than a "dug-out." It is beaten by short heavy sticks, and can be heard a great distance. The drum from the Múton Chang can be heard here, at least six or seven miles in a direct line. Some are made of a hollow tree with the inside gradually burned out, and open at the ends, some 20 feet long by 3 to 4 in diameter.

From here we went back to the Rájah's house, and heard an alarm of fire, which, from the general excitement, seems to be rather dreaded. On the chang we had a good wash, water being poured out of bamboos. It is here also rather scarce, and I dare say they considered it woeful waste to use it for such a purpose.

Our dinner was now ready, and as it was getting dusk, we went into our apartment, not, however to dine in private, as we had hoped. Our mat wall contained too many loopholes, to be resisted by feminine curiosity, and an audience of thirty or forty had to be submitted to, whose exclamations at every new phase in our proceedings gave us proof of our being among many people who had never before seen a white face. I have no doubt that the *modus*

operandi was to them mysterious in the extreme ; our candles, tumblers, knives, forks, and spoons, were as good as news in a foreign tongue.

It being now dark, we made preparations to let off a couple of rockets, which I had brought, as a final exhibition. A good site was selected where they could fly over an uninhabited precipice, and yet be seen by the whole village. A bamboo tube guide was soon placed and the fuse lit, after placing the Rájah's party where it could be well seen. The fuse, however, went out and had to be re-lit, when the rocket flew off beautifully, just in the direction I had wished. A gun had been fired to warn the pykes to be on the look out, and we heard a hun of exclamations at once. After about five minutes, I fired the other and it flew, if anything, higher than the first, and burst well, the stars coming out well too, a piece of the case kept burning just long enough to let them see their value. It was evident, they were in mortal dread, as they told us that they were all very sleepy. I afterwards heard that the rockets were looked on as two devils, which I do not wonder at. As a "peace-offering" they were very valuable, I have no doubt. Our audience had to be turned away at last, as they shewed signs of staying by us all night, and we went to sleep. We were disturbed about two or three hours after, by a torch being thrust in, and found we were being 'interviewed' by some fresh arrivals from another chang. To this we responded in Anglo-Saxon and Asamese adjectives, and had them bundled out, and got peace at last.

On the 1st June, we were awoke by the old Sowdong calling out to us that if we slept after the sun was up, we should be ill, which must be a Nágá proverb. The view to the east, as the sun rose behind Deoparbat, was magnificent. The bottom of the valleys filled with white mist, the mountain shadows crossing in great blue bars, an isolated peak rising here and there clear like an island wooded to the top. We were ready to start, and were advised to start soon, as the sun would be hot. We bade adieu to the Rájah in pantomime fashion, to which he responded, and then went away, each provided with a staff that saved us many a slip.

The walk did us good, and we got to the Sissa at 8 o'clock, a distance of about five or six miles, and sat down for a short time, to see if our men would come up. I went a little way up stream to a picturesque bend where the water rushed on each side over large boulders in the bed, making a great noise. The cliff on the other side was a sheer precipice of sandstone strongly laminated, dip to south 85° to 90° . Here we watched some girls gathering stones about the size of oranges used in preparing rice.

Finding our men did not soon come up, we started on through the Erra back towards the Longhong path, the sun being fearfully hot, and several times we had to rest, there being no shelter. On gaining the Longhong road, we sat down and found the Nágánis close at our heels though carrying heavy loads. We here remarked for the first time the peculiar noise like a whistle or

note on a flute, clear and plain and seeming to come from the chest, made by Nágánís when carrying loads and distressed. The men told us that they always did so, when fatigued and out of breath. Subsequently we heard the same noise or note, and found it was made by an old Nágání, who carried a maund of rice and seemed half dead, though a muscular old lady.

We now selected a hut among the dhán in which to rest and enjoy the view till our men came up. It certainly was a magnificent view, and I could see a white speck on the horizon towards Sibságáar that may have been the Rongghar or Ghargáon.

We were highly amused at the Húlúks, or long-armed apes. They hallooed, the chorus being led off by one giving two distinct whistles; he then stopped and the chorus rose to a climax and fell off again; after a pause the two distinct whistles were repeated, and the chorus at once broke out again. In no instance did they ever begin without the "que." Subsequently I found that I could start them by using a railway whistle, which I use to attract deer on moonlight nights. I do not know, by the way, if the fact is known, that on hearing loud whistling (during October and November, at least) deer will charge. I once shot a large Sambre doe, as large as a pony, skin 9 feet from the nose to tip of tail; on my whistling loud, it charged out of the jungle into the open and, on repeating the whistle, charged straight at us, when I knocked it over at twenty yards. Eight men could hardly carry it in. The fact is well known here, but I do not know if naturalists are aware of it.

While resting in the hut and admiring the view, some Nágás and Nágánís came up en route to see the elephants. We therefore accompanied them and soon got to the Sissa where the elephants were located and found all ready to start. Many people had come to stare at the tame elephants, and to fish. We were admiring the surroundings, and watched the women catching fish by hand, when a man came to say that our muharrir had had some difficulty in getting our loads carried down, and that after starting one man had run away, though close to the camp, and he had to return and get another. Our loads were thus so delayed, that we determined to push on home, where we arrived about 5 p. m., earlier than we had expected, as the distance must be 20 to 24 miles; but we were not so fatigued after all.

The muharrir came in after dark, very much disgusted at the trick they had served him. The influence of the Rájah seems less than might be expected and the liberty of the subject at its maximum.

We could not help speculating, during our trip, on the effect of introducing some good seeds, as the potatoe, which would no doubt grow here luxuriantly. From internal evidence, the population seems to have been stationary for a long period, perhaps centuries. The checks are all positive, too, such as constant warfare and the want of food, inducing disease,

&c.* The trouble, time, and labour expended in raising their crop of hill rice, or their Koní dhán†, if sunk in potatoes or wheat, would yield them four or six fold, and enough to supply the plains with the former, as in the Khassia Hills. Whether it is politic to render them wholly independent while they have such vague ideas regarding their relationship to us, I cannot say. A peaceful policy till we get a railway, would seem the best for us planters, unless extraordinary vigour was shewn. A glance at the map, and a knowledge of what they have done, would shew at once that they could nearly annihilate tea south of the Brahmaputra, by a system of night raids, for which they are famous. The present almost deserted state of this portion of the Sib-ságá district, between the Dík'ho and Diling and south of the Dhadúr Alí, is a standing proof of what they did forty years ago, "committing such devastation," according to Robinson, "as to force the ryots to remove from the neighbourhood, and stop all communication by the roads." And there are men living who remember this tract as a vast village, or a series of villages. The destruction was done by Nágás, Burmese, and Singphús.

Not only during our trip, but both before and after, the question of our present mutual relationship pressed on our notice. It is not a bad habit, especially in a country like this, which we have recently invaded, to get the "oldest inhabitant" in any locality, and enquire. Thus we here heard among others, that there never was, in the old days, a fixed boundary to the province here, and not only did the Nágás give regular tribute in kind to the Asamese Rájahs, but the so-called Abors as well. There were both Nágá and Abor 'Sokeals,' or Official Interpreters, and the Abor tribes had access to the plains through certain routes, now closed to them. I see also, by referring to Robinson's Asam, p. 384, that the Nágás about here are reported to have paid allegiance to the Rájahs of Asám, and again so at bottom of p. 386. As far as I can see, the tribes about here now forget this, and consider themselves *de facto* free, and any attempt on our part to remind them of their former allegiance by active measures, such as taxation or surveys, would lead to serious complications and to a

* We did not see the places where they cultivate their kachchús, and garden produce, called "Erra;" but I have since seen some clearances of this kind, at the Nágá village near Borhát on the Desang and Dhadar Alí. The land was carefully enclosed by a fence made of the boughs of the trees felled inside the clearance, not piled carelessly, but built up so as to be wholly impassable and impervious to pigs. Inside, I found kachchús, chillies, yams, and also mint, cotton, and plants which I did not know. The ground was carefully weeded, and paths led through it, and small 'tougs,' or huts on posts, were erected here and there to serve for watching at night.

I found many opium-eaters at this village, even among the lads. They are Mohongias.

† Koní, dhán, and sowl.

combined action on their part. What we have most to fear is their incredible ignorance: hemmed in and stationary themselves, they cannot comprehend our having other troops than what they see at Dibrogarh, and laugh to scorn any idea of our being able to cope with them. Like an enraged child with a knife, they may inflict some severe cuts before the knife is taken from them.

The question of population of course occupied our attention, and is one difficult of solution. This tribe consists of four villages, and the mean of several Asamese and Nágá estimates of the number of houses was as follows:

Banpara,	300 houses.
Longhong,	200 "
Uñú,	350 "
Nokrong,	50 "
	—
Or a total for the tribe of	900 houses.
	—

I am inclined, however, to think it far above the truth, and that 600 houses is nearer the mark, and that the able-bodied men are about 1,000 to 1,200, or two to a house.

The Joboka Nágás have five villages, *i. e.* Joboka, Kamlung, Bor Uútú, Hárú Uútú, and Longting, and an Asamese estimate gives the following numbers:—

Joboka,	500
Kamlung,	400
Bor. Uútú,	400
Hárú Uútú,	300
Longting,	200
	—
Total	1800 houses.
	—

This also, I think, is over-estimated, and 1000 to 1,200 will be nearer the truth. This would give, say 2,000 able-bodied men.

The Mútóns have four villages, *i. e.*, Bor Mútón, Hárú Mútóns, Kulun Mútóns, and Naugáon, (I may add that it was called 'new village' at least sixty years ago). Whether these are really separate tribes or simply different villages of one, I cannot say. A Rájali is at each, but they never go to war with one another, but fight on the contrary together, I believe, against any enemy. Their ák also is the same.

Of the Bor Duárias, Páni Duárias, and Námsangias, I cannot give an estimate, but I think that they have not less than 1000 to 2000 houses, each tribe.

Some of the Abor tribes again are very small and consist of but one village, and that a small one; as the village and tribe of Bánhsang (Bamboo-chang). With a powerful telescope, which I had for a short time here, I could make out changes on many peaks, far in the distance to the south, of whom neither the Asamese nor the Nágás had any knowledge whatever, and no name but Abor, and I regretted not having a good telescope with me when on my trip, as we could have seen changes away in several directions, not to be seen from the plains.

Between the Desang on the east and the Dík'ho, there are as many as 8 or 10 tribes having a frontage to Asám. From Desang to Luftry alone, only 35 miles, there are six tribes, *i. e.*, Bor Duárias, Mútoms, Banparas, Jobokas, Sanglors, and Lakmas, and this gives but six miles average frontage. They do not extend far into the hills, so that each may safely be said to occupy about 40 or 50 square miles. In some cases a tribe is more extensively placed; but again in others, as Sinyong, the entire tribe consists of but one village. I know of no cases where one tribe has conquered, and become possessed of the lands of another; hence the *status quo* seems of long continuance. The oldest 'Nogáons,' or new villages, are not less seemingly than 40 or 50 years.

As a consequence of the above noted custom of head-cutting, and its isolating influence, few Nágás reach the plains, but those living on the border. We thus see a community of some hundreds perched on a hill, and depending almost exclusively on their own resources, constantly fighting others similarly isolated, on all sides, yet thoroughly able to maintain themselves. Perhaps in no other part of the world can so complete a tribal isolation be seen, and subdivision carried to such an extreme. The available land, too, seems all taken up. To every 40 or 50 square miles there are about four villages, of perhaps one hundred families each; yet from the nature of the case, as before stated, not more than an eighth or tenth of the land available can be cultivated at one time, and the population would seem to have reached its maximum.

I am aware that in some places there are hills and ranges said to be uninhabited, but I know of no such places here, except the peaks and ridges of the highest hills, 5,000 feet high, or more. All the other hills, as far as the telescope can penetrate, shew signs of recent or previous cultivation. But not even the names of the tribes are known, let alone the villages. Indeed, I have lately detected large villages where all Nágás insisted that there were none.

The raids and isolated murders for which this large tract of country is so celebrated, have one feature in common, *viz.*, surprise. Cover is so universal, and favourable to the attack, that advantage is invariably taken of it until the last moment. As a rule, when a whole tribe is at war, the

cause is a general one. One Rájah or trihe has been grossly insulted by another. In such cases a chhang may be surprised and burnt by a combination of several villages. In other cases a single village of one tribe is at war with another village of a different tribe, without involving the other villages in hostilities. Bor Múton may be at war with Unú, and not involve Kúlúns or Longhong. Or again what is a common form, the young and untattooed men of three or four villages of say two distinct tribes may combine and, headed by a few older men, quietly traverse the jungles to a more distant tribe and village and, suddenly attack the people in their cultivation, the object being simply heads.

Returning to the Banparas, I may say that with regard to weapons, they use, like most Nágás, the 'jattie,' or spear, and the 'dháo.' They also use the cross-bow.* I see that Robinson lays great stress on their not having bows and arrows; he considers its total disuse a very singular circumstance, and draws rather weighty conclusions from it. It is not, I hear, of recent date. In the use of the jattee they seem clumsy and had shots; I have tried hatches of several tribes at a mark for prizes, but found them unable to reach 80 yards. Nor could they touch a sack of straw for half an hour at 60 yards (where I volunteered to go and be shot at), but at 40 yards one did succeed.

Captain Norton says in his book on 'Projectiles,' that he could once throw a spear 170 yards, and saw the wife of an Australian chief throw one 120 yards; hence the Nágás do not seem very formidable on this score. They use their jatties for close work, usually from ambush, and never attack in the open.

The dháo is used as a hatchet or mace, and held by both hands. One blow is usually enough, if fairly given in a fight, as they can cut with tremendous force. The jungle is so thick and common, that their warfare is wholly by ambush and surprise, and this gives the dháo great advantages.

The bow is chiefly used for game and pigs.

They have a shield, or 'phor,' made of buffalo or boar skin, and often ornamented by goat's hair dyed scarlet, or by cowries. It figures in their war dances, but I suspect is not much used elsewhere, unless in a premeditated onslaught.

Like most savages, the Nágá seems to aim at making himself look as hideous as possible, and their decorations at times of festivity have solely that object. Their head gear seems generally to have some bunches of hair fastened to long light stems so as to jerk about while moving. It is the hair of the man or woman who has been killed, and in all cases, I think, is human hair, if not of an enemy. But there seems no one particular head gear which

* 'Hap' in Nágá.

all adopt ; on the contrary, there is infinite variety ; any one who can dress or look more hideous than his neighbour, is at perfect liberty to do so.

The chiefs often wear a long dark blue coat like a dressing-gown not tied, that contrasts strongly with their usually nude condition. Asamese cloths are also bought, and worn by the Nágás who can afford the luxury, during the cold season, but those who cannot, wear the little scrap commonly seen at all times and about the size of foolscap. Women wear an equally scanty morsel, which in some tribes, I hear, is even dispensed with. Pewter, or red cane, bracelets or armlets are considered of far greater value and moment. As far as we could see, the women wear no head gear at all, and about half have the hair cropped short.

The bunches of hair and feathers on the topis are all usually mounted on thin slips of buffalo horn, exactly like whale bones.

Of trade there is little or none. With the exception of the salt mines or springs eastward, and some pán and kachchús brought in exchange for rice, there is no such thing as trade. The tribes are too poor to be able to trade, and the constant state of warfare renders commerce impossible. On concluding a peace, some dháos and Abor cloths change hands, or a mitton ; but as a rule the border tribes act as a most effectual barrier to all attempts at commercial transactions with those beyond.

It may be worth noting that the border tribes have now lost the art of weaving or very nearly so, as the little scraps of cloth they require, are procured in Asám ; while the Abors are able to weave very pretty, though coarse, pieces of party coloured cloth, as they cannot trade with Asám.

If it were possible to open broad, neutral avenues among these hills, to allow the remoter hill tribes a chance of getting into the plains, it would benefit all parties and injure none, and the Abors* would thus be our native allies. I may here mention that, even in the rains, five hours' dry weather after a week's rain leaves communications as they were before the rain. The water runs off as it falls, while in Asám we should have a month's 'boka,' or mud.

Both physically and linguistically, there is a good deal of difference in the tribes bordering each other. The Nágá vocabulary compiled by Mr. Bronson at Jaipúr in 1840, is of no use here, but sixteen miles west, though some words are known ; but the numerals are different, and they here only count to ten.

* I have carefully enquired both among Asamese and Nágás regarding the Abors, whether they have a wish to visit the plains, and all without exception say, they are extremely anxious to do so. This of course is to be expected, as some of their most valuable articles, as iron, comes from Asám, though in small quantities and in shape of dháos. Asám to them is like a goal, always is sight, but never to be reached. They live in sight of the plains, at not more than a day's journey. They are born, live, and die, longing to cross a narrow strip of land, but cannot.

When once with a number of Banparas on the road, a large party of Nágás passed, and as neither party spoke, I asked who they were. I was pointed out their hill, and on asking why they did not speak, they said they would not understand one another. This I thought a good opportunity to try them, and told them to call them in Nágá and ask who they were. On being called to, they all turned round, and stopped, but said nothing; I then made them call again; but to no purpose, the other party simply jabbered together in twos and threes, and on calling them a third time as to where they were going, they shouted out a lot of Nágá which my fellows could not make out. Both parties passed on, unable to exchange a word, though living within a few miles of each other. A few words did pass, but they were Assamese. I asked how they knew the men, and they said "by their ák," or tattoo marks. There is more lingual variation among the remote tribes, I believe, than those bordering Asám, as the latter frequently meet in the plains on a peaceful footing, while the Abors are shut out from all intercourse.

The physique also varies with the tribe. I can as a rule tell a Joboka man from a Banpara, and these from a Múton, or Namsangia, and Assamese. Those who are familiar with the tribes can easily do so, without seeing the ák to guide them, simply judging by their general physique and colour. Of course there are exceptional cases, such as small stunted men, or others unusually tall or well made.

Practically, the extraordinary confusion of tongues opposes a serious obstacle to the explorer, and the sooner we set to work to reduce the confusion by inducing opposite causes, the better for us and our successors, and for them and their successors. Tattooing as a decoration, or prize for committing murder, is at the bottom of it all, I fancy, and is so deeply rooted, that it may take a long time to eradicate by peaceful means.

Their religion seems confined to the fear of a legion of deotás or devils, and has no system, and their devils are of course on a par with their limited ideas. Whatever they do not understand, is the work of a 'deotá.'* Every tree, rock, or path, has its 'deo,' especially *bor* trees, and waterfalls. If a man is mad, a deo possesses him, who is propitiated by offerings of dháu, spirits, or other eatables. Deos in fact are omnipresent, and are supposed to do little else than distress human beings. The only remedy is presents and counter witchcraft. They seem to have no idea of a Supreme Being, the idea is certainly not 'innate' here. There are no regular priests, though they have 'deoris,' men whose office it is to bury or attend to the dead. Two or more such men are in each village. They tie up the corpse

* I was once asked by a Nágá to point out which of two men had robbed him of three Rupees, and to use, for the purpose, a small horse-shoe magnet I had. He was under the impression that it was capable of pointing out moral delinquencies.

in toeoo leaves, and put it on the 'rúk túás,' where it is left till sufficiently deeyacd when the skull is put in the Morrang.

APPENDIX I.

Numerals used by the Banparas and neighbouring tribes.

<i>Banparas.</i>	<i>Mohongias.*</i>	<i>Namsangias.†</i>
1. eta	tumehee	vanthe.
2. annee	kinee	vanigie.
3. ajum	kahom	vanram.
4. allee	mellee	beli.
5. aggah	manga	banga.
6. arruek	torrong (k?)	irok.
7. annutt	tenjee	ingit.
8. atehutt	ashut	isat.
9. akoo	akoo	ikhu.
10. abbau	abau	iehi.

It is worth noting that the Banpara numerals all begin with *a*, except the first.

SPECIMEN OF A NAGA VOCABULARY.

<i>English.</i>	<i>Nágá.</i>	<i>English.</i>	<i>Nágá.</i>
Above,	dingko.	Arm,	tzuk.
Abode, n.	hum.	Arrow,	sán.
Across,	árem.	Ashes,	lábú.
Afraid,	ráh.	Asleep,	gíp.
After,	pai.	Aunt,	ániehum.
Aged,	árúpa.	Awl,	janmut.
Air,	rung tez.	Axe,	vá, or bá.
Alike,	tavei.		
Alive,	{ áráng. araung.	Babe,	{ mánsá. náusá.
All,	pang vei.	Baek, n,	tawkí.
Alone,	kúra.	Bag,	nítzung.
Amber,	násá.	Bait, n.	púsen.
Ankle,	shiádúa.	Balanee, n.	túak.
Angel,	hárung.	Bamboo,	nyud.
Animal,	mai.	Bandage,	káko.
Ant,	tziktza.	Bank,	túm.
Apé,	mainak.	Barn,	kúng.

* The Mohongias, or Bor and Pání Duárias, 8 miles east.

† The Namsangias are at Jaipúr, 16 miles east.

<i>English.</i>	<i>Nágá.</i>	<i>English.</i>	<i>Nágá.</i>
Basket, cage,	shawkshawu.	Bowl,	kup kwaw.
Bat,	pawkpi.	Box,	shwak.
Battle,	ron.	Boy,	náusá.
Bead,	lík.	Bracelet,	kapson.
Beak,	chukin.	Branch,	punchuk.
Beam,	langpang.	Brandy,	zú.
Bean,	píásá.	Bread,	án.
Bear,	tchupp.	Breakfast,	kongsaha.
Beat,	pít.	Brick,	há.
Bee,	ná.	Bridge, large,	váloh.
Beetle,	chong.	small ;	shai.
Before,	taut.	Brook,	shwása.
Bent,	kúm.	Buffalo,	lúí.
Bellows,	zetpo.	Bug,	veikoi.
Belly,	vawk.	Bull,	mai hopong.
Below,	hopong.	Bullet,	jantang.
Belt,	ropák.	Burial place,	rúktúa.
Best,	hánko.	Burn,	vun súng lei.
Betel,	kovai.	Butterfly,	pítúak.
Between,	hawtawng.		
Bird,	awe (as the English 'awe').	Cable,	rú.
Bite,	chut.	Calf,	mai húsá.
Bitter,	ká.	Cane,	reh.
Black,	nák.	Cap,	kohom.
Blacksmith,	changlík.	Cascade,	tí kong lci.
Blanket,	ní.	Cat,	miásá.
Blind,	míkdok.	Cave,	hakon.
Blood,	adzi.	Chair,	tun tong.
Bloom,	mei púa.	Charcoal,	mák.
Boar,	vakla.	Charm,	vem.
Boat,	quánú.	Chicken,	awsá.
Bolster,	kungtán.	Chief (Rájah),	vang hum.
Boil,	taw.	„ (subordinate),	vang sa.
Bone,	opák.	Chin,	kárá.
Book,	tantung.	Chisel,	juntúp.
Bottle,	pei (as the English 'pay').	Cholera,	mízí.
Bow,	háp.	Clearance (new), of land,	nau erra.
		Club,	punkum.

APPENDIX II.

The Asamese Koni Bih, or Poison Berry.

The seeds of this shrub or tree are used by the Asamese to kill and intoxicate fish in the rivers. They usually select the deep pools, after the floods have subsided, and stake both the outlet and inlet, so as to prevent the fish from escaping.

It seems that both the leaf and the bark are capable of poisoning, if used in any quantity; but they are not used, because the seed (husk and all) is far more active. Some say the husks alone are to be used.

Fresh seeds are not selected, but rather old and half rotten ones, and I hear that if they have lain on the ground, they are still better. The custom is to collect them some days before the poison is required, and steep them in water. When soft they are pounded up, seed, husk and all, with some water, care being taken to protect the face and especially the eyes. When thoroughly reduced to a pulp, the mass is allowed to stand a day or two, and is then ready to be thrown into the stream a little above the place selected to catch the fish.

About 5lbs. of seed will poison a large 'dhúbí,' and of course affect the stream a long way down. I hear that it is injurious to human beings, and stories were told me of people killed by it, but I doubt the fact. It seems universally agreed that if the seeds are kept for a long time in a pot, moistened and allowed to rot (? ferment), the poison is far more active, than if only kept a few days.

'Nágá Bih,' another poison used to intoxicate and kill fish.

The tree known by this name grows to a large size, often 2, 3 and 4 feet in girth, and 50 to 80 feet high. Unlike the Koni Bih, the seeds must be used when rather unripe, or at least not old; but all parts of the tree seem to yield the active principle, though the seeds contain most for a given weight. The poison is also most virulent if used immediately; and for this reason, I suppose, it is the juice itself that is poisonous, and not any product of fermentation, as seems the case in the first poison. A larger quantity is also required to produce the same result. It is prepared much the same way as Koni Bih, that is, pounded up with water and macerated.

The outside of the husk is covered with fine hair or down. The seed case when cut through, rapidly changes from a light yellowish white to a dark greenish black in about a minute or less.

There are also other kinds of poison called 'Lota Bih' and 'Deo Bih,' the latter not known to the Asamese, I believe, and 'Bor Bih,' which is brought down by the Mishmís.

